

*Washington, DC* - Responding to a request by U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-Dover), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to conduct an immediate inspection of flooding along the Ramapo and Wallkill Rivers. Army Corp personnel will inspect both rivers later this week.

Congressman Hall said, "Flooding is a persistent problem along both the Wallkill and the Ramapo. There's more than one cause to this problem, and it will take many hands and many steps to fix it permanently, but right now, we want to focus on some short term goals to alleviate the immediate issues."

Congressman Hall said the immediate goal is to clear the waterways of debris that may be contributing to flooding. Yesterday, he met with Colonel John Boulé, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Commander for the New York District, to discuss the situation.

Following the meeting, Col. Boulé said, "We're concerned about flooding in Southern New York. I'm personally going up next week to do a reconnaissance and coordinate with local officials to see what we can do to mitigate future flooding risks."

Congressman Hall said, "I'm grateful to have Col. Boulé's personal attention. With his help, I'm sure we can move forward with this problem."

Meanwhile, Congressman Hall is calling on Governor Patterson to commit to action that will help identify a long-term solution to the problem. Last year the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that a major study is warranted. But progress has been stalled by a lack of local funding.

In a letter to Governor Patterson, Hall wrote, "In order to move forward with a Feasibility Study, a local cost share of approximately \$1.5 million in funding or in-kind services is necessary to match Federal funding of the project. While I am fully aware of the financial crisis New York State is facing, I cannot stress enough the need for this commitment."

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March 17, 2010

Governor David A. Paterson

State Capitol

Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

I am writing to you about an extremely important matter in the Hudson Valley. As you are aware the Army Corps of Engineers recently conducted a Reconnaissance Study on the Wallkill River Watershed that determined flooding conditions warrant additional action. In order to move forward with a Feasibility Study, a local cost share of approximately \$1.5 million in funding or in-kind services is necessary to match Federal funding of the project. While I am fully aware of the financial crisis New York State is facing, I cannot stress enough the need for this commitment.

In the 19th Congressional District, which I represent, the Wallkill River cuts through the Black Dirt farming regions of the Towns of Goshen, Warwick, and Minisink in Orange County. While the River normally serves to irrigate crops and keep this historically agricultural area thriving, it can also cause a fatal blow to the growers' livelihood when it breaks beyond its banks. In 2007 and most recently this month, the River flooded after heavy rainfall and turned normally fertile land into large bodies of water. Fortunately the most recent flooding took place during a period in which no crops are in the ground. However in 2007, many growers lost their initial investments and had to re-plant. We cannot continue to expect the members of our agricultural community to gamble on the future because their government is unwilling to invest in a remedy.

Therefore I am urging you to commit to funding this worthwhile project to provide an incentive for growers to continue working on and investing in the Black Dirt Region. This will not only provide a reliable source of locally grown produce, but also a sustainable agricultural industry in the Hudson Valley. In these difficult economic times, we must invest the resources necessary to protect the livelihoods and property of the successful farms and businesses in the Black Dirt Region and throughout Orange County.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John J. Hall

Member of Congress